

years ago when I first came to Omaha, Nebraska, to make a living we didn't have the money to afford a television set. I was into reading books. I read a lot more then than I do today. One of the first books I read was William Faulkner's novel Absolem, Absolem, and there was a wonderful passage in Absolem, Absolem which reminds me of what Senator Schmit said and reminds me of what lies ahead of us. Faulkner is describing a typical Faulknerian character who developed a very large reserve of land in Mississippi and he said, this man came into virgin land, he cleared the trees, with a mule he pulled the stumps, he took the red clay soil, he turned it over, he sowed, he ultimately harvested a crop, he built a house. He, in effect, wrenched a living out of hard scrabble land. But in the passage you had a sense, I had a sense for the strength of the character, the stamina of the man, the vigor, the sense of purpose, the determination to get a job done and what we are talking about today is getting a job done. Now as Mao Tse-tung said, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step." The first step toward long-term financial solutions lies in structural reform of our schools and our state. Our sister states have found that. Iowa has found that to be the case. Kansas has found that to be the case. So you begin, you begin with a school structure reform and once that step is taken you begin with a state aid approach which we all know is coming, but the statistics today don't warrant state aid approach because today the great recipients of state aid are not Omahas or Lincolns or Fremonts. No, they are Cherry County District #170. Cherry County District #170, Class I school district gets \$1,305.48 per child. Eight out of the top ten recipients of state aid today are Class I school districts. Well here is the next one, Cherry County District #16, 32 children, \$1,144.06. Here's the next one. Keya Paha County, Keya Paha County District #21, 21 children, gets \$1,094.27. I don't see Fremont there. I don't see South Sioux there. The truth of the matter is we are taking our finite resources today and pouring them into an archaic educational structure and like the character out of Absolem, Absolem, we have to wrench a new way of finance and structure from rocky soil, but it can be done. Senator Rod Johnson says, what is the grand plan for education? As though somehow there is a mystical figure out there, Obi Kenobi, who will convey to us a grand plan for education. Let me tell you, Senator Johnson, the grand plan for education rests in your hands and yours, Senator Haberman, and yours, Senator Remmers, because we are the